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ABSTRACT

This small booklet describes the Winchester Community School in New Haven, Connecticut. It begins by introducing and defining a new term, the "urbanvantaged" child. Winchester is dedicated to the development of this inner city child in a community school. Activities implemented by the school program include: (1) simultaneous kindergarten registration and health screening, (2) PTA activities, (3) sex education and family living in grade 6, (4) a social studies fair, (5) a winter vacation camping program, (6) the Winchester Exchange Program, (7) a program to motivate special class students, and (8) successful activities for the urbanvantaged child.
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Winchester: A Community School for the Urbanvantaged

Barry E. Herman

FASTBACK 101

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BARRY E. HERMAN

Barry E. Herman is principal of Winchester Community School in New Haven, Connecticut. He has had a distinguished career as a teacher, curriculum service teacher, assistant principal, and principal. He teaches education courses on a part-time basis at Southern Connecticut State College. In addition to holding office in many professional and community organizations, he is currently president of the School Administrators Association of New Haven. Herman is the author of over 70 articles on education and has contributed material to five books. He is listed in *Community Leaders of America* and *Leaders of American Elementary and Secondary Education*.

Dedication and Acknowledgments

This book is dedicated to the dynamic staff of Winchester Community School. Their love of children, cooperation, and hard work have made Winchester a leader among urban schools.

I also wish to acknowledge the friendship, assistance, and dedication of two outstanding team members. Richard DeNardis, currently the assistant principal of Winchester Community School, and his predecessor, Paul DelGobbo, who is currently a principal of his own community school.

This book would not have been possible without the close family feeling of staff, students, parents, and community leaders working together for a common goal.

Series Editor, Donald W. Robinson

Winchester: A Community School for the Urbanyantaged

By Barry E. Herman

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Who Is the Urbanvantaged Child?

I am tired of terms like culturally deprived, disadvantaged, educationally handicapped, underprivileged, etc., used to describe inner-city children. We should think positively when speaking about urban children. I have coined a new term: the *Urbanvantaged Child*.

Who is the urbanvantaged child? He may be black, brown, yellow, or white. He lives in one of our large industrial population centers. His home may be a cold-water flat, two rooms over a store, a new high-rise apartment building, or a spacious one-family house. His father is a lawyer, custodian, factory worker, or shopkeeper. Or his father may be out of work. Or he may have no father at home at all. His mother is a housewife, seamstress, domestic, waitress, or teacher. He likes sports, movies, animals, and ice-cream sodas. The urbanvantaged child usually attends Sunday school, catechism classes, or Hebrew school. He has belonged to the "Y," scouts, boys' club, community center, or a neighborhood gang.

He is lucky to live near a museum, library, theater, store, zoo, civic center, and college. He likes to shop with his mother, explore in the park, play games, and watch people. He enjoys trucks, trains, buses, traffic, and noise. His school is either a shining new edifice of steel, glass, and brick, or a depressing three-story structure condemned 20 years ago. On his way to school and play he meets people of every color, creed, and ethnic background. He is excited over redevelopment, human renewal, and change. His city-world is a thrilling place.

He resents being called disadvantaged, deprived, or poor. He is urbanvantaged and is proud of it.

*For clarity and economy we use the masculine form of pronouns throughout this fastback when no specific gender is implied. While we recognize the trend away from this practice, we see no graceful alternative. We hope the reader will impute no sexist motives; certainly no sexism is intended. —The Editors

How Do You Whip Apathy and Hostility in the Inner-City School?

It is extremely difficult—perhaps impossible—for the inner-city school to truly educate its students without the aid and support of their parents. Yet it is far more difficult to generate active parent interest—parent involvement—in an inner-city school than in, for instance, a suburban school. Many parents in the inner city face severe social and financial problems; education in these circumstances is a low-priority item.

Further, though inner-city parents may be just as concerned as other parents about a good education for their children, many harbor deep-seated negative attitudes toward the school. These attitudes may be based on personal experiences or may simply be due to lack of formal education. In either case, these parents are apathetic at best and, at worst, consider the school a hostile place.

It is up to the principal and staff of every inner-city school to combat this apathy and this hostility. They must work hard—often, initially, with a nucleus of interested parents—to promote the school within the community. The school should be a place the community views with pride—a place where children are happy and industrious while receiving a quality education.

This is not easy to achieve. How do you whip apathy and hostility? One answer, based on my experience, is to involve the parents in the school's programs. But this raises another question: How do you persuade parents to become involved?

We have found some of the answers to the latter question here at Winchester Community School, an inner-city school in New Haven, Connecticut. It is about 99% black, and it is the largest elementary school in the city. Winchester has 550 pupils and about 50 staff members. Most of the children come from a large public housing project.

Winchester undertook a series of projects to promote parent involvement and encourage community support. These programs have produced worthwhile results. Attendance at parent meetings is up, vandalism is down, student absenteeism has dropped, student academic achievement is gaining, and parents are taking a greater interest and are participating more fully in school programs. The Winchester projects were not aimed solely at parents, but included the total school community—parents, students, and staff.

Changing some staff attitudes was the first step and an essential one. Staff members were made to feel that they were working toward a goal, that dedicated teaching would pay dividends, that inner-city children could learn, that administrators were interested and would back staff members. Staff members were also encouraged to experiment, to plan cooperatively, and, when they faced problems, to use the "open office door" policy established by the principal. A cabinet elected by the faculty met periodically to consider proposed projects and to formulate school policy. A weekly staff bulletin published excerpts from current articles dealing with the problems of inner-city children. A School-Community Council made up of elected parents, teachers, and paraprofessionals was organized. It meets monthly with the principal and assistant principal.

A school's best "salesmen" are its students. In light of this fact, a Winchester student council was organized and a school newspaper was launched. Students began to help teachers plan assemblies. A color guard composed of fifth- and sixth-graders was formed and opened every assembly with a salute to the flag and the singing of a patriotic song. Additionally, administrators and community leaders now give "pep talks" to both students and teachers over the school public address system and at assemblies. The talks deal with such subjects as citizenship, human relations, and positive attitudes. At school assemblies students are awarded certificates for scholarship, citizenship, attendance, and safety practices.

All of these undertakings have helped foster in the students a feeling that Winchester is "their" school. Parents soon began to feel the same way. They were told, at meetings and in a monthly *Parents Bulletin*, that the welcome mat was out at Winchester. They were encouraged to come to the school at any time if they had a problem and both the teaching and nonteaching staffs made sure that visiting parents received a friendly greeting.

A "We Are Proud" bulletin board has been set up in the main hall, with pictures of our students, alumni, parents, staff, and community leaders who have received recognition and newspaper clippings about them. Periodic hall displays of pictures of famous black Americans are hung up for students to see, to study, and to build on in developing positive self-images. Art and literary work done by our students are also displayed on hall bulletin boards.

A distinguishing feature of Winchester Community School is its diversity of teachers, teaching styles, and philosophies. Despite these differences, the staff gets along together and cares about children and the learning process. Above all there is a genuine partnership with the parents and with the community. Winchester Community School is a real family—staff, students, and parents working together with definite goals in mind.

The Inner-City School as a Community School

The community school concept is a movement and not an establishment. Ezra Cornell described the community school concept when he said, "I would found a school where any person could find instruction in any subject."

Community school education is a comprehensive and dynamic approach to public education. It is a philosophy that pervades all segments of the school and directs attention to the needs of the community. The community school serves as a catalytic agent, providing leadership to mobilize community resources for the solution of community problems. This marshaling of all forces in the community helps to bring about change as the school extends its services to all people.

How does a community school differ from a traditional type of school? The community school is:

1. An education center—a place where children and adults have opportunities for study, learning, and cultural enrichment.
2. A neighborhood community center—a place where citizens of all ages may participate, for example, in sports, physical fitness programs, informal recreation, arts and crafts, musical programs, civic meetings, adult education, home economics, tutoring, and leisure-time activities.
3. A center for community services—a place where individuals and families may obtain health services, counseling services, legal aid, employment services, and homemaking help.
4. A center of neighborhood and community life—a place that can assist citizens in the study and solution of significant neighborhood problems.

An effort has been made to achieve feedback between the day-time education programs and the after-hours programs. In order to do this the teachers and the after-school staff are being encouraged to view the various services and programs as coordinated with a single purpose: to provide more adequate and better integrated services to the total community and school population—preschool, regular school, after-school, and adult.

What is happening inside a community school? From 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. a community school is a beehive of excitement and activity. Winchester was built as a community school in 1952, replacing a 68-year-old structure. It includes 30 classrooms, a full-size gymnasium with bleachers, locker rooms, and showers, a 540-seat auditorium, a large cafeteria, a 100-seat theater, a 9,000-book library, the city's department of audiovisual education, a medical and dental suite, rooms for home economics, arts and crafts, music and recreation, and many small offices and meeting rooms.

The success of a community school depends on the cooperation and involvement of the people it serves. The principal and assistant principal work closely with a nucleus of neighborhood professionals and parents who constitute the "Team." The Team's main job is to promote a positive image of the community school as a friendly place for all neighborhood people, regardless of age, interests, or educational achievement, and to provide programs geared to the needs and concerns of all citizens in the neighborhood. The Team conducts a constant evaluation, dropping unsuccessful activities and adding new programs that fill neighborhood needs.

Children, teen-agers, and young adults share in these after-school programs in the Winchester School-Dixwell community:

Boys' gym (afternoon and evening)

Girls' gym (afternoon and evening)

Neighborhood leagues and games

Tutoring

Cooking class

Sewing class

Gospel Choir

Instrumental music lessons

Drill Team

Science and Rocket Club

Ballet class

- Modern dance class
- Arts and crafts
- Sculpture class
- Brownies and Girl Scouts
- Cub and Boy Scouts
- Benjamin Banneker Advancement Academy
- Softball, touch football, and basketball (seasonal)
- Indoor field hockey
- Ceramics
- Story telling
- Reading games
- Math games
- Children's theater
- Chess Club
- Career Awareness Club
- Charm class for girls
- Gameroom
- Civics Club
- Photography Club

Many summer programs operate at Winchester, for the school is open 12 months a year, including the regular one-week vacation periods at Christmas, in February and in April. Summer programs include day camping with swimming at nearby beaches and state parks, a tiny-tot building recreation program, gameroom, outdoor recreation, sewing, neighborhood movies, and outdoor night recreation.

Community Involvement: A Positive Approach in Choosing Teachers for Winchester Community School

To many educators, community involvement means community control, with parents taking over the schools and telling teachers and principals what to teach and how to teach. This is not necessarily the case. Community involvement can be very positive, helping the principal and his staff to do the job and to do it better.

Winchester Community School has been drawing from community resources for the past nine years. Parents help select new teachers for the school. Every time a new teacher is sent by the office of teacher personnel to be interviewed, the principal arranges a small committee of parents and school staff from the School-Community Council to help in the screening and interviewing process.

After the teacher leaves, the committee discusses his merits and weaknesses. The committee has been unanimous in accepting and rejecting applicants. If two parents wanted an individual and the two school people did not, the principal would break the deadlock.

About 50 teachers have been hired by this committee method to teach at Winchester during the past nine years. All of these teachers have been successful and are still teaching in the school system.

Start Right with Kindergarten Registration

Winchester has initiated a successful community health project whereby parents can register their children for kindergarten and have the child receive a complete health screening at the same time.

First, the project was explained to PTA representatives, the school staff, and students. Then physicians, a dental hygienist, speech therapist, nurses, parent volunteers, school personnel, and nutrition experts were asked to become involved. Finally a letter was mailed to each parent whose child would be entering kindergarten, giving all details of the project and the day and time for the child's appointment. The day before the appointment a phone call or visit was made by volunteers to remind the parent.

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of a week in April were set aside for registration. A flow chart of the steps was made and copies duplicated, so that each parent would know where each health service would be provided.

Monday came. Sixth-graders acted as guides. A student guide stayed with each parent and child, taking them from one health service to another.

Upon entering the school, all parents and children were asked to go to the lobby, where they were welcomed by the school's community relations worker, the principal, and several paraprofessionals who were also parents living in the community. There were coffee and refreshments, and a television set was turned on for the waiting parents, children, and younger siblings. (Parent volunteers took care of these youngsters while parents registered their kindergarten children.) Nutrition experts from the University of Connecticut demonstrated inexpensive after-school snacks and drinks that parents might make. Recipes and health booklets were distributed.

After the brief orientation the screening went as follows

Main office—Registration by school secretary and guidance counselor and beginning of child's school and health file

Auditorium stage—Visual examinations by parents, volunteers and school paraprofessionals trained by the school nurse

Speech therapist's office—Hearing testing by a therapist using an audiometer

Dental room—Complete checkup of teeth and gums, cleaning of teeth, and a fluoride treatment by the school's dental hygienist. Each child was given a toothbrush and toothpaste after the examination.

Nurse's office—Physical examination by a local pediatrician with inoculations for those who needed them

Conference room—Conference with school nurse on any physical or family problems. The nurse recorded all results of the health and screening information on the child's health card.

What were the results of the project? The findings included one child referred for glasses, one hyperactive child, three cases of hearing loss, 22 children with cavities and one with serious tooth decay, 33 boosters and three vaccinations administered.

In past years the number of children who registered during the regular April kindergarten week had numbered between 13 and 18 out of a possible 70 to 80. The majority came in September at a very busy and hectic time for school officials. This year out of a possible 72 children who were contacted 58 kept their appointments and were screened. Six children were ill and five had moved from the neighborhood. Only three parents did not respond.

A PTA 'Fun Activity Nite' Draws a Large Turnout of Parents

When an enthusiastic teaching staff joins with interested parents, the result is a successful parent/teacher program. A "PTA Activity Fun Nite" was held last year at Winchester Community School. Parents had the opportunity to choose two workshops from these 10 reading games, math games, arts and crafts, cooking, physical education games, science fun with microscopes; browsing through black history books, woodworking, community singing, and guidance services. These workshop activities, led by teachers, ancillary staff, and paraprofessionals, were similar to subjects taught to the children during the day. Parents learned and had fun doing and making things.

Staff members also experienced satisfaction and joy in watching the happy faces of parents as they created projects in arts and crafts, baked miniature pizzas, looked at protozoans under a microscope, practiced on the gym's trampoline, varnished decoupage wood pictures, sang songs, square-danced, made reading games to take home, and strung Cheerios on strings to use in teaching their young children to count by tens. One parent was overheard telling her friend, "Boy, what fun! I hope they do this again next week."

School people should plan creative, fun-filled, and novel programs to get parents to come to PTA meetings. Most PTA meetings are dry and boring which may be one reason attendance nationwide is way down. PTAs need a good "shot in the arm."

Sex Education and Family Living in Grade 6

Why can't boys have babies? My mother smokes—will she die of cancer? What is heroin? What is rape? These are just a few anxiety-filled questions that my sixth-graders asked a popular New Haven pediatrician who conducted a series of weekly sessions on health and physical development with a class of lively, normal, inquisitive, healthy boys and girls.

In spite of a busy practice, the doctor accepted a grant by the Connecticut State Health Department to service our school one day a week. His purpose was to instill good health practices among the community school families and at the same time create a friendly and helpful image of the physician. He felt that low-income families regarded physicians with distrust and fear and would consult a physician only in the most serious of emergencies. Besides trying all this, he handled the usual cuts and bruises and any serious case that required attention while he was in the school building. He also gave physical examinations to those who could not go to private physicians.

It all started when the doctor visited a sixth-grade classroom engaged in a unit on the human body. He came in while the teacher was describing the heart and the circulatory system and offered to bring in a model of the heart and talk to the children about it. The teacher agreed and was delighted at the prospect of a real doctor coming in to talk to the children. The next day he was back and gave a very stimulating lesson on the heart to a group of wide-eyed children. They flooded him with questions and he answered each one truthfully and at the level of the children he was addressing. Immediately after the lesson the same idea occurred to both of us: Why not do this kind of activity on a weekly basis?

After the first few class sessions, the doctor and the teacher discussed possible topics, and hints were sometimes planted at the end of a session. The doctor concluded one session by writing the word *radium* on the board and asking the children to find information about it. At the following week's session the children eagerly reported their findings. Questions were raised: What does radium look like? Where is it found? How does it cure cancer? Can it cure other diseases too? Why did Madame Curie die from it? These sessions motivated the children to do research and helped develop skills and understandings that were being taught in other subjects.

During the "cold and sniffle" season the doctor swabbed a germ culture from the throat of a child who had a sore throat. He put the germ culture into a Petri dish and placed the dish over the room radiator. The children checked the dish daily and watched in wonderment as the germ colonies grew. The next session naturally revolved around colds, sneezing, germs, prevention of colds, and the importance of covering your nose or mouth when you have to sneeze or cough.

From time to time the teacher brought in films to use with science units. One such film was on the role of insects in disease. The next time the doctor came, the children wanted to know about elephantiasis, typhus, yellow fever, malaria, and other diseases carried by insects. Again, the children's questions were answered frankly and in simple terms as they had been in previous sessions. Each child was always satisfied with his answer, and the doctor soon won the confidence and friendship of the children, as he had hoped. There were sessions on smoking, on the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol, tuberculosis, rabies, pasteurization of milk, leprosy, the heart, allergies, the care of the body and the teeth. The children looked at blood samples under a microscope, and they saw an x-ray of a stomach ulcer.

In April, after enlisting the help of the school nurse, we decided to tackle the area of sex and family living. We began by ordering three films from the Connecticut State Department of Education: "Human Growth and Development," "The Story of Menstruation," and "As Boys Grow." Then we arranged an evening showing to the parents of fifth- and sixth-graders at a PTA meeting. We told them of our plan to show the films to their children and invited comments. The parents unanimously agreed on the merits of showing the films.

to their children. One parent said that this was one subject he couldn't explain to his child and was embarrassed even to talk about it. Others agreed and felt that the "experts could do it so much better." Permission notes were sent home and parents agreed to allow their children to see the films. We showed "Human Growth and Development" to both boys and girls, "The Story of Menstruation" to girls and "As Boys Grow" to boys. We are now using "Boy to Man" and "Girl to Woman" instead.

The girls saw their films first and the school nurse led the discussion. The boys saw their films next and the doctor conducted a discussion. As a follow-up he met with groups of eight or 10 children grouped by grade and sex, without the classroom teacher present, on a weekly basis. He discussed the films and answered questions. In these small-group sessions the children freely asked revealing questions, some surprisingly mature, about puberty, human sexual relations, dating, sexual relations among animals, laws on sex acts, and illnesses that can develop from sexual relations.

The doctor cleared up many "old wives' tales" and primitive ideas. He felt that boys and girls desperately needed accurate information. Answers picked up from other children had created misunderstandings, wrong ideas, and unhealthy attitudes toward sexual development and marriage. Our efforts were aimed at developing positive attitudes about sexual development so that these children will have healthy and wholesome attitudes when they reach adulthood.

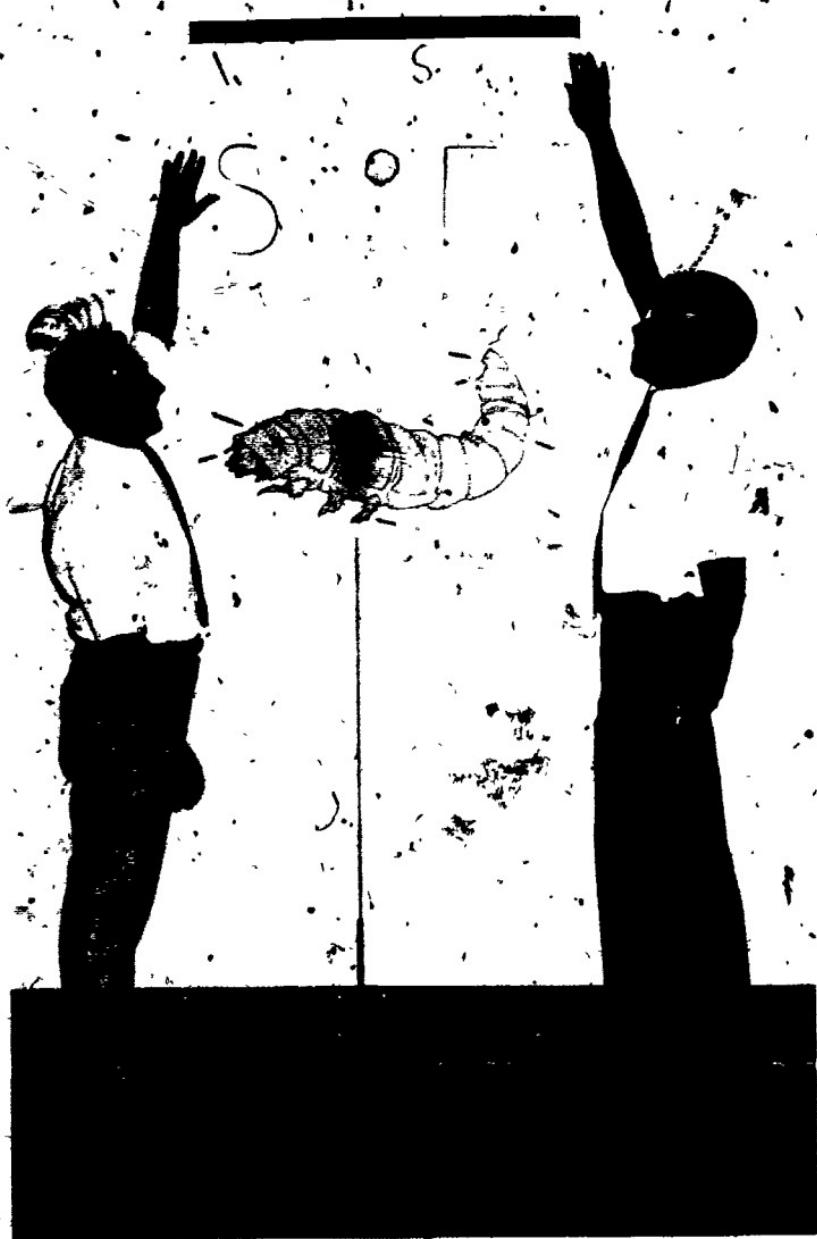
Often children from low socioeconomic families have no one to turn to when they need answers to social and physical problems. Our program is continuing now without the doctor, but the Board of Health resource people and our School-Community Council are involved in working with the teachers, students and parents.



Winning the city-wide grade 4 spelling bee



Social Studies Fair



Science Fair

21
20



A hospital dietitian teaches a fourth-grade class about foods and nutrition



Special assembly in tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Negro in America - Black history art exhibit

23

Why Not a Social Studies Fair?

Elementary schools for years have held science fairs, art fairs, and book fairs, but never a social studies fair, so far as I know. Why not? The question was answered this year when a few staff members decided to plan a schoolwide social studies fair at Winchester. The staff felt that social studies was the neglected subject and needed a boost.

The social studies fair was held in June. Parents, students, and school officials from Winchester and other schools came to view the exhibits. Besides the usual murals, relief maps, models, and dioramas, some very unique projects were displayed. A third-grade class made a large table model of the entire neighborhood, building the high-rise apartments and streets out of cardboard boxes. Two electric quiz game-boards for matching states with capitals and information about them were built by fourth-graders. A light turned on when the wire touched the right answer. There were Indian tepees, a model of a medieval castle, maps and booklets about each state. A kindergarten class displayed a table filled with different kinds of litter picked up around the neighborhood. A second-grade class made papier mâché orangé-head puppets after studying about the Israeli kibbutz. A first-grade class created a three-dimensional map of Italy from a piece of foam rubber. There were booths on ecology, electricity, and pollution that related science and the social studies. One class made a tape recording of noises that characterize the school community and neighborhood.

A sixth-grade class conducted a survey in the neighborhood on how residents felt the area could be improved. The greatest number of persons responded, "cleaning it up." "More policemen on the streets" ran a close second. Answering the question, "What business would you like to see open up in the area?" the majority of those in-

terviewed replied, "a large discount store," "food markets," and "more black-owned businesses" in that order. The questions and answers were all displayed on charts at the fair. Over 100 persons were interviewed by the students.

A highlight of the fair was a gigantic trade exhibit showing products and goods manufactured in the area. Students in the three sixth grades wrote to 300 large companies in south-central Connecticut asking for samples of what the companies manufactured. Over 200 responded with letters, literature, and products. Students stopped by the office daily asking if any mail had arrived. They wrote their own letters, thus correlating language arts with social studies. Sample products sent to the students included a redwood bird house, a wall lamp, a silver and crystal candy dish, display charts of buttons, hardware tools, metal wire, curtain rods, a six-pack of soda, ball-point pens, music records, rubber gloves, razor blades, cosmetics, chemicals, buckles, and locks. All the items, literature, and letters were displayed at the fair. At the end of the fair the students were allowed to keep what they had received.

William James once said "There can be no impression without expression." By writing, reading, drawing, and building, children have the opportunity to collect historical and current data, geographic details, do research, and execute plans in order to create expression in some form. Children need to satisfy their innate curiosity about people and places. They love to express themselves. The teacher needs to capture this spirit and guide it constructively. What better way than through a social studies fair?

Eating Lunch with the Principal—A Special Treat

"Lunch with the principal today" has become a pleasant and prestigious time for students at the Winchester Community School. Each day I choose six or seven students to have lunch with me around the conference table in my office. I start with each sixth-grade class, choosing students until everyone has had a chance to eat with me. Then I go to the next grade until all the students in our 550-pupil school from grade 6 through grade 1 have eaten lunch with me. This is accomplished by the end of the year.

The rewards are many. I get a chance to know each student by name and personality. Students have a chance to see me as a normal, friendly human being and not as the "mean old principal." I emphasize with the students that the principal is their friend and I show them the word principal on a sign in my office and underline the word pal in principal. Also, having lunch with the principal in his office becomes a pleasant and positive experience for each child.

At one luncheon session, cooked carrots were served as the vegetable. The seven children with me ate everything except the carrots. When I asked why they didn't like carrots one child replied, "They look nasty!" I told them how nutritious and important cooked carrots and all vegetables are for growing boys and girls and for good health. I told them that I ate my carrots and showed them my empty tray. I coaxed each child, one by one, to try the carrots. Each child ate his carrots and admitted they didn't taste bad after all. Eating together is another way to teach children to eat their entire lunch. At each luncheon session I remind children that I expect them to join my "Clean the Plate Club."

After eating we hold "rap" sessions and I learn from them their personal problems and their likes and dislikes about school, their

teachers (information I keep secret), and school policies. Children also have the opportunity to interact socially with each other and talk freely, joke, and share ideas.

Once, after finishing lunch, a group of sixth-grade boys saw their teacher's picture, taken the year before, in a school picture album. One of the boys remarked, "Hey, here's a picture of Mr. J. He looks like a white man in this picture!" His friend next to him said, "You're stupid. Mr. J. is a white man!" It's true, Mr. J. is white and the children are black. This incident was a tremendous compliment to the teacher; because it demonstrates that the children accepted him so completely that skin color was not an issue.

Bright and Talented Winchester Students Are Not Forgotten

The Benjamin Banneker Advancement Academy is a unique program for academically talented and creative students at Winchester. The program provides "supplementary schooling" for a selected group of about 40 students in grades 4, 5, and 6. While we offer compensatory programs in reading, math, tutoring, etc., we often forget about our gifted and more able students.

The Benjamin Banneker Academy is named for a black scientist, writer, and inventor of the Revolutionary era. This is but one of the community school's many attempts to allow children and their parents to identify with their black heritage in a positive way.

The program is under the direction of a day-school teacher who works as part of the after-school community school staff, assisted by volunteer tutors from Yale University, Southern Connecticut State College, and Hopkins Grammar School, a private preparatory school in the area. The academy stresses the importance of gaining proficiency in English, particularly through creative writing and the study of literature. Each student is required to study either conversational French or Spanish. Each student chooses one elective from ballet, Chess Club, modern dance, Science-Rocket Club, arts and crafts, sculpture, cooking, instrumental music lessons, sewing, Children's Theater, Gospel Choir, and others. These electives are also offered to the entire student body as part of the regular community school program. Nonclassroom activities include field trips throughout the school year.

The program, launched with a \$1,500 grant from a foundation eight years ago, is now funded through the regular school budget.

It is hoped that this additional enrichment schooling for our promising pupils will provide them with a sufficient background so that they may be able to enter private schools on a scholarship or become part of the Ulysses S. Grant program at Yale University. Even if they should not, we believe we have an obligation to stimulate bright students to become future leaders.

A Winter Vacation Camping Program

A winter vacation camping program is not a new idea. Agencies like the YMCA, YWCA, and Jewish Community Center have been conducting them for years, but it was unique for a New Haven public school to have such a program during a Christmas vacation period. Our school offered physical education, recreation, and social activities that week, but for upper elementary and junior and senior high students. Then someone suggested a camping program for elementary students during the vacation period.

The neighborhood planning team approved a schedule for the camp as follows:

Tuesday—9:30 a.m. to 12 noon assembly, bowling (entire camp), 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. film festival at Yale University Art Gallery

Wednesday—9:30 a.m. to 12 noon, song fest, gymnasium program, 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. swimming (younger campers) ice skating (older campers)

Thursday—9:30 a.m. to 12 noon, arts and crafts gymnasium program, preparation for talent show, 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. swimming (entire camp)

Friday—9:30 a.m. to 12 noon mystery bus trip, 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., New Year's Party, performance by magician, camp talent show

Each day from 12 noon to 12:30 p.m. was lunch time. During this time campers engaged in low-activity games. The counselors were paid by the Park and Recreation Department and by college and high school work-study programs. Funds for transportation were provided by the community school transportation budget.

Because other community school programs were offered without charge, some individuals expected the camp to be a free activity. However, a \$2 activity fee was set up to help pay the cost of bowling, ice skating, arts and crafts, and milk and dessert for the campers who brought their lunches with them each day.

Flyers went out to parents of children in grades 2 through 6 and the response was overwhelming. Staff was hired and program arrangements were completed. In a few days the quota of paid registrations—one bus load—was reached. However, after camp started other children asked if they could join; no child was refused. By the end of the week, two buses were needed to transport the campers. Children in camp were from eight different public and private elementary schools in the area.

On the Friday afternoon before the vacation camp began, a counselor orientation period was held, at which the staff reviewed games, songs, camp activities, rules and regulations, handling of children, and the philosophy of winter camp.

It was decided to run the program much like a summer camp. Each child was made to feel as if he were taking part in a summer camping experience. The classrooms used for meeting in the morning were called bunks. Each counselor had eight to 10 campers divided between boys' bunks and girls' bunks by age and grade. Morning assemblies in the gymnasium were used for learning camp songs and games, followed by major activities for each morning and afternoon period.

On Friday a mystery bus trip took the campers to a chicken hatchery in a nearby town. The campers saw eggs incubating and through a special light were able to see different stages of an embryo inside an egg. The high point came when campers were able to hold, play with, and examine three-day-old chicks. Publicity about the trip reached the local newspaper, and a photographer took pictures of the children with the chicks. The pictures and story appeared a few days later.

A New Year's party with special refreshments and ice cream sundaes highlighted the last afternoon. A magician performed and each bunk participated in a talent show that was open to parents and friends in the community.

The Winchester Exchange Plan

When do you hit a low point in the school year? Usually, it's January, February, or March. When are you most enthusiastic? In September, at the beginning of the year. Why not repeat September enthusiasm in February? The Winchester Exchange Plan helps a teacher do that.

Second- through fifth-grade teachers exchange classes with another teacher of the same grade. Teacher A teaches one class from September until January and then switches with Teacher B until June.

The change seems to benefit both the teacher and the student. Students are cured of winter doldrums. A child who's not doing well with one teacher gets a fresh start with the other. Of course the plan is flexible. The child who's experiencing success with one teacher may remain in one class all year. However, most of the students gain from the strengths and skills of not one teacher but two.

A new class in February is a shot in the arm to a tired teacher. Two teachers work closely together and study the progress made by each child. Also, Teacher A works harder to prepare his class for Teacher B. The bud of team teaching blossoms because two teachers are forced to talk to each other, plan cooperative programs, and find out about new children.

What better way, especially in our urban school systems where reading and arithmetic scores have dropped, to stimulate creative teaching? The Winchester Exchange Plan is an answer—and the price is low. In fact, it doesn't cost the Board of Education or the taxpayer an extra cent.

A Weekly Popcorn Project: A Novel Way To Motivate Special Class Students

A class of educable retarded students, with the help of their teacher and their student teacher has cured those "Friday blues." The class has developed a thriving, lucrative popcorn business. Every Friday a tantalizing aroma of freshly popped popcorn permeates the school wing near Room 27. Buying a bag of fresh buttered popcorn has become a ritual for both students and teachers. A nominal fee of five cents brings pleasure to hundreds each Friday afternoon after school.

The popcorn project can be thought of as a business venture or a miniature company. Since all the children are involved, each child has definite responsibilities, and jobs are rotated. Jobs include buying the raw materials (corn kernels, bags, oil, butter, salt, etc.), making the popcorn, bagging the popcorn, selling the popcorn, keeping financial records, and depositing the profits in a savings bank account. Some of the children have been elected to administrative positions such as president, secretary, and treasurer. The students not only gain valuable business experience and advance academically, but are able to develop individual pride and class solidarity. Each student comes into contact with other members of the school community, and this interaction helps him to overcome any feeling of inferiority he may feel because of his special class status.

A popcorn business offers another advantage. The class raises money for bus trips, for purchasing art and science materials, and for special events.

What better way to learn the laws of economics, the flow of money, vocational requirements, and basic arithmetic, than through a weekly popcorn project? Moreover, a popcorn project motivates a child to enjoy school and offers him valuable social, emotional, and educational experiences.

Some Successful Activities for the Urbanvantaged Child

Of the many activities introduced at Winchester Community School, most have become continuing or annual events. Some of these are:

1. *A Paperback Book Fair.* This was held on two days and one evening, when children and parents had the opportunity to browse new books and magazines, make purchases, and be stimulated to become acquainted with all kinds of reading materials. Special emphasis was placed on books by black authors and books about famous American Negroes. A committee of parents and teachers planned and ran the book fair. This has become an annual event.

2. *A Community Variety Show Benefit.* This affair was a variety show benefit featuring local bands, singing groups, and dance groups from the community. The program was initiated by high school work-study students who work in the after-school program. Teen committees were organized, and the teen-agers signed up the local talent (who performed free of charge) and handled publicity, making posters and selling tickets. Many parents helped as ushers and chaperones. Many neighborhood bands and singing groups use the school for practice and rehearsal sessions.

3. *An Eight-Week Course in Negro History.* This course for parents, teachers, and adults in the community began after interest was aroused at a PTA meeting where multiethnic and Negro history materials used in classrooms were exhibited and discussed. A Yale American history major was hired to teach the course. Each lesson drew a high percentage of parents. This course was taught for three years.

4. *Exhibits of Negro History Materials.* Periodic exhibits showing pictures of outstanding American blacks are displayed in the halls and in the classrooms. Much background work is done by the curriculum service teacher and classroom teachers to develop racial pride.

and a good self-image in each student, and to foster better learning and study habits.

5. *Wide Use of Audiovisual Aids*. All types of audiovisual aids such as filmstrips, films, urban study prints, pictures, and charts showing black and other minority-group members in positive roles are used effectively in the classrooms and at PTA meetings.

6. *A School Chorus*. A fifth- and sixth-grade chorus directed by the music teacher performs at PTA meetings and assemblies and gives concerts at other schools. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend all musical programs. Many parents are present at each event. A Christmas concert and spring concert are held each year.

7. *Parent Volunteers for School Trips*. Each classroom teacher asks parents to accompany his class on field trips. These trip experiences not only enrich the parents, but win friends for the school.

8. *Weekly Meetings with Psychiatrists*. The school staff had the opportunity to meet with two psychiatrists who volunteered their services for group sessions once a week. Ways of handling "problem" children were discussed, techniques and ideas shared, and insights gained.

9. *Discussion of Achievement Test Scores*. At a PTA meeting parents and teachers were shown the results of achievement tests given to second- and fourth-grade students earlier in the year. Median scores were shown and compared to median scores for the city. The school scores were almost identical with the city median, which closely paralleled the national median. In some cases the school did better than the city median. This presentation boosted morale of the teachers, who felt that their hard work and energy were paying dividends. Parents gained new confidence in the work teachers were doing with their children.

10. *An Art Fair*. Inner-city children are artistically creative, but seldom does one see the results of their labor. Hence, an all-school art fair open to the public was held in the library for one week. Winchester Community School students visited the fair and had their egos boosted when they saw their own creations on display. (We have also held science, social studies, and learning fairs.)

11. *Lively PTA Meetings*. PTA meetings are interesting and friendly gatherings. The last meeting of the year is usually a supper-social at which a catered dinner is served. PTA service awards are given to dedicated PTA and school people. The program also in-

cludes installation of new PTA officers, entertainment, and specially invited guests. A novel table arrangement brightened the supper-socials. Twelve tables, representing each of the months, corresponded with birthdays. Each person sat at his birthday table. In this way parents and teachers were able to meet and make new friends. Appropriate songs were sung for each month.

12 *School Assemblies*. Frequent school assemblies are held in which prominent local community leaders are invited to speak. Also different classrooms present programs in which professional child and adult theatrical groups perform. Parents are invited to all assemblies.

13 *Physical Education Field Day*. This is held in the gymnasium, and practically every one of the school's 550 students participates. The physical education teacher teaches and supervises as the students join in square-dancing, tumbling, gymnastics, and other athletic feats. A large number of parents and interested adults come for this occasion. We also hold an outdoor "Olympics" in the spring, at which students from each upper-grade class compete in running, relay, and other sports events.

14 *Youth Serving Youth-Tutorist Program*. The Black-Educators Organization sponsored a new assistance program in which selected inner-city high school students were paid to tutor elementary students who needed help in reading and mathematics and in developing good self-images and pride. The program helped both the tutor and those tutored. Additional volunteer tutoring programs are being carried out as part of the regular academic school program and as part of the after-school program.

15 *A School Band*. A committee of parents working closely with school people has helped to start a school band. Forty fifth- and sixth-grade students now take instrumental music lessons. The parents, through different fund-raising projects, were able to purchase many instruments for the children. These purchases supplement the instruments bought for the school by the Board of Education. Our school-community relations worker with parents, staff, and students helping saved 55 books of trading stamps to get a television set with which to hold a raffle so that money could be raised to buy musical instruments. About \$500 was realized from the raffle. The following year the same worker saved another 55 books of trading stamps and presented the school with a television set.

Teaching Urbanvantaged Children—A Summation

A teacher of urbanvantaged children in an inner-city school will face days of frustration, exhaustion, excitement, and satisfaction. He should forget all he has learned about the "disadvantaged child," "the culturally deprived child," and the "economically impoverished child." He must have the strength of Hercules, the patience of a saint, the wisdom of Solomon, and the endurance of an astronaut.

Teaching in an inner-city school is an unending challenge and there is no "cookbook" for success. It requires freshness and vigor of mind. It requires confidence, stability, and a creative spark. A strong personality is needed to draw out the intelligence and fashion the character of young people in the process of development.

A teacher must be sensitive to the needs of his students. He must learn which words act as triggers to set off feelings of hostility. He must talk to his students so as to make them feel that they are wanted and needed. Student values related to family, honesty, cleanliness, and ambition will not always be identical with the values that the teacher himself cherishes. The inner-city child wants respect, not sympathy, from his teacher. Teacher and child should learn to build respect for each other's ideas and values.

Teachers should carefully plan their daily lessons. All activities should be well organized, structured, and basic to the needs of students. Those activities relating to life needs and problems, issues involving family life, ecology, economic concepts, and human relations, and problems affecting urban living should be incorporated into lessons. Teaching should be more child- and life-centered than subject-matter centered.

The constant objective should be to insure that all students will learn to read, write, and speak the English language with some flu-

ency. Reading is the basic function of the school program, and the teaching of effective reading and language skills are among the most important contributions inner-city teachers can make at this time.

A teacher should borrow from both traditional and "open" methodologies. The traditional approach contributes rules, discipline, authority, rote, organization, order, and strong demands for achievement. The open concept emphasizes humanism, exploration, interest centers, motivation, learning by doing, projects, group activities, and personal pupil/teacher and pupil/pupil relationships. Teachers must learn to bridge the gap between theory and practice. They should encourage students to help in the planning of field trips and room projects, in the solving of some class problems, in the planning of units and activities, and in arranging physical aspects of the classroom.

There is no secret formula for success as an inner-city teacher. But a love of children, high expectations, a sense of humor, a feeling of dedication, lots of hard work, and a sincere desire to teach will certainly help.

While no two urban community schools will be the same, and while no single school, even one as successful as Winchester, can be a precise model for another community, guidelines do exist that may be useful anywhere. The current literature and the Winchester experience lead us to recommend particularly these 10 guidelines:

1. Teachers being trained for service in inner-city schools should be encouraged to forget all they had learned about the "disadvantaged child," the "culturally deprived," and the "economically impoverished." Be a teacher!

2. Teaching in inner-city schools requires freshness and vigor of mind. In common with all teaching, the job implies the ability to draw out the intelligence and fashion the character of young human beings in the process of development.

3. Seminars should be held for teachers to stress the importance of patience, forbearance, and the conviction that every child who comes to school has the right to be taught by a sincere and capable teacher who really believes that all children can learn.

4. The constant objective is to make certain that all pupils in their classes can read, write, and speak the English language with some fluency.

5. Each teacher should be his own reading specialist. He should

be taught how to use the basic reading skills and should learn that there is no great mystery involved in teaching those skills

6 Reading is the basic function of the school program, and the teaching of effective reading skills is the one most important contribution that a teacher can make to an inner-city school at this period in our history

7 Teachers about to start work in inner-city schools would most definitely be helped to understand that minicourses or demonstrations in black English, jive talk, street dialect, and Swahili are not acceptable substitutes for competent performance in standard oral and written English

8 The acquisition of skills in intricate ancient tribal dances, cymbals, wood blocks, and tambourines are legitimate uses of leisure time, but these activities should never take precedence over the fundamental skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic

9 Teachers in inner-city schools should be given opportunities to meet and know the mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, and grandparents of the children they will teach. This will give them a chance to know the aspirations and the dreams of those adults firsthand. Teachers will realize that those parents want the best for their children. They want their children to become better educated and to make the advances that they themselves were denied.

10 Teachers assigned to inner-city schools should be dynamic agents of change sensitive to the problems of the here and now and determined to help find some of the answers. New methods should be devised to determine the fitness of candidates for the teaching profession, because it is a waste of time to have people in such sensitive and essential positions who cannot carry out the requirements of the job.

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